

CONDUCTED BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL CITY MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION

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## INDUCTION OF CITY EMPLOYEES

*How can an employee induction program help in retaining municipal employees? What are the steps to be taken in establishing induction procedures?*

Many cities would be reconciled to the difficulties of recruiting and training employees if they could be sure of retaining these employees as permanent additions to the work force. The purpose of this report is to describe the formalized induction programs of three cities as a guide to what can be done in other cities. This report deals with reasons for an induction program, the steps to be taken, the different approaches to induction, and the adaptation of these procedures for the smaller city. Much of the report draws upon the induction programs for Kansas City, Missouri; Phoenix, Arizona; and San Diego, California.

### Reasons for an Induction Program

A certain amount of personnel turnover exists regardless of established policy, salary scales, or job conditions. This type of turnover may be listed as unavoidable or continuous turnover for marital reasons, pregnancy, family responsibilities, movement to another area, military obligations, death, retirement, and so on. In addition, some employees are released for inefficiency, disciplinary action, and lack of work.

However, a municipality must reduce the loss of personnel caused by avoidable separation. This type of separation often arises from grievances or poor impressions that the employee receives during his first days on his job. Constant turnover among newly hired personnel is not restricted to one city or even to one area; it is not restricted to areas where wages are low and employment temporary. Pay scales, security advantages, and fringe benefits all aid in establishing a sound personnel program, but these factors alone are not enough for retaining competent people.

San Diego has compiled some factors that contribute toward high turnover regardless of salary or fringe benefits. The following are typical statements made by employees in different organizations when asked how they were started on new jobs:

Case 1 — After taking exams, I was sent down to see the department head at 10:15 a.m. He immediately called in one of his supervisors and said to him: "Here you are, Mr. X, take this man out and put him to work!" At 10:30 a.m. I was taken outdoors where several trucks were lined up. The supervisor said, "Boy, that there is a truck. Get your tool box and get on it and get hot!" Being about 80 degrees in the shade, I did just that! What an indoctrination! Lucky I didn't get hurt — how lucky can you get? Of the many things pertaining to my job, such as safety rules, fire fighting, leave regulations, pay, and so forth, no one told me anything. Most things I learned the hard way.

Case 2 — After filling out so many forms and waiting in one line after another for one-and-a-half days, by the time I finally made it down to the department where I was to work I was so discouraged and disgusted that I was ready to call the whole thing off and go home. After being rapidly shunted from one unfriendly face to another, I was finally introduced to my supervisor. He coldly looked me over and started out like this, "Now fellow, I'm going to tell you something. This is a heck of a job and a lousy place to work. It's a nasty job. But you'll get no transfers in my shop. If you don't like this job, just see me tonight and you can quit."

Case 3 — The senior clerk was coldly polite and formal. I had the feeling that he didn't like me and that I'd better watch my step with him. I felt ill at ease. However, he took me almost immediately to my lady supervisor, who without further ado took me to one of the many huge tables on which lay long rows of cabinets contain-



ing trays of cards which were lined up. Trays were being pulled out noisily by the closely packed clerks, who would make entries on the cards and slam the tray back. The noise and confusion were terrible. Stacks of papers were piled everywhere. I wondered how I could survive working for 8 hours a day here! The supervisor introduced me to a lady clerk who was told to get me started. She took a huge stack of papers of all colors and descriptions, and spent the rest of the day plying me with endless details, innumerable exceptions. Most of it went in one ear and out the other. Small groups of people disappeared from time to time. I was afraid to leave, and I did not eat lunch because no one told me that there was a cafeteria nearby — besides I did not know about the lunch hours. I do not know to this day how I ever survived those first few days on that job!

Case 4 — The supervisor looked over my papers and shouted over to another supervisor, "Hey Joe, I asked for a mechanic and look what they sent me!"

Case 5 — Everyone seemed cold and unfriendly. I was shunted from one place to another. In several places I was told that I was in the wrong place — and who sent you here! When I asked people where I was supposed to go, they gave me a blank stare and told me to ask someone else — they didn't know. I was lost half the time. From the supervisor on down no one gave me a smile or had a single friendly thing to say. I quit at the end of the day.

If the employee leaves his job because of circumstances that are not directly related to his work, then the city has lost not only a potentially suitable employee but also the money and expense that went into recruiting, testing, and training for the position.

It is difficult to ascertain the monetary cost resulting from the resignation of a new employee. Much depends upon the recruitment procedures, the job involved, and the economics of the area. Nevertheless, certain factors enter into the recruiting program which can be considered in adjusting the cost of constant turnover. The major expenses are advertising and publication of the vacancy; testing, interviewing, and general screening of candidates; training and induction of a new employee; accounting, clerical, and administrative procedures involved when a person is hired; increased unit costs due to lower production from a new employee; and loss of production time.

An intangible expense which cannot be computed in monetary terms is the attitude or atmosphere that is created because of constant high turnover. The employees, both recruits and veterans, feel that they are working in a situation of flux and uncertainty, resulting in low morale, inefficiency, and disloyalty to the organization and/or the supervisors. A group of individuals who experience constant departures of their fellow workers will not establish, unless under extreme difficulty, teamwork or a feeling of group cooperation. Employees who are preoccupied with problems unrelated to their jobs cannot produce to their utmost capacities.

The purpose of an induction program, then, is to convey the idea to the new employee that the city wants him to make a success of his job and to remain on the payroll as long as he cares. The induction program introduces a new employee to his job and to his fellow workers as quickly as possible and formulates the beginning of loyalty, teamwork, and security. Above all an induction program should eliminate or subdue the initial fears that an employee has when he reports to work.

An induction program should be concise and concrete; be formalized on a permanent basis and should be an integrated part of personnel procedures; apply to every new employee who has assumed a permanent position; inform a new employee of all major aspects of municipal employment; and aid the employee in overcoming anxieties and uncertainties that he faces when first on the job.

### Starting the Induction Program

The supervisor is the key person in the induction program. Therefore he should be solicited to cooperate with employee induction and be trained to perform the various duties in regard to an induction program. The personnel office or officer, providing that the city operates under a central personnel program, also performs an important function in induction.

Instructing the Supervisor. All department heads, supervisors, section chiefs, and foremen are informed of the induction program as administered by the city. In Kansas City all supervisory personnel receive a letter pointing out the importance of the program and asking for their cooperation. The letter, signed by the training and safety supervisor of the personnel department, reads as follows:



To: All Supervisory Personnel

August 14, 1956

### HANDLE WITH CARE

Perhaps we should stencil the above warning on the forehead of every new employee.

Here's what happened to 611 of the 1176 employees appointed to regular, full-time positions last year:

- 115 left us after working 30 days or less
- 128 left us after working 60 days or less
- 110 left us after working 90 days or less
- The remainder (258) left before the year ended.

What happened to all these people? After all the time and effort invested in them, they left us. The same amount of time and effort spent on refilling the same positions is not enough. To slow down the costly cycle of recruiting, selecting, and breaking-in we need to spend more time and effort with new employees.

Let's face some cold facts:

1. The applicants accept the conditions of their employment.
2. Those certified to the appointing authority were found to be capable of performing the work required.
3. The appointing authority upholds this by putting the man on the payroll.
4. Having the ability to do the work does not mean that the new man will.
5. Just as we polish, lubricate, and otherwise "baby" a new car or machine, the human being needs more attention during his early employment days than later on as he grows in confidence and skill.
6. The continual injection of inexperienced man-power is a constant drain on the efficiency and morale of the work unit.

In order to lower the needless number of separations and thus effect a savings in supervisory time and effort, the following recommendation is made:

### ORIENT AND INDUCT THE NEW EMPLOYEE WITH CARE

The attached booklet provides you with six easy-to-follow steps which will put a green man on the right road to becoming a dependable employee.

In Kansas City all supervisors also receive a brief booklet entitled, "How To Induct a New Employee," which explains to the supervisor the purpose of induction and its benefits. The booklet lists and describes briefly six necessary steps for inducting a new man: (1) put him at ease; (2) explain the work of the section; (3) inform him of his duties and responsibilities; (4) inform him of the work of the section and its physical facilities; (5) assign him to a supervisor; and (6) make periodic checks on his progress.

In San Diego the supervisor has a six-page bulletin (pointing out the need for the program, examples of poor induction, and the best means towards inducting a new employee) and a checklist of the major induction items which should be explained to new employees (see Figure 1).

Role of the Personnel Office. If a municipality has a central personnel program, the personnel office has an important function in administering the induction program. It can provide assistance and training for the supervisor in orientating and inducting the new employee. It can expedite the induction process by assisting the employee in filling out routine forms, by conducting central orientation classes, and by promoting a uniform and well prepared induction program. It may present the new employee with printed material pertaining to municipal employment. Kansas City mails an employee's handbook to the newcomer's home with an accompanying letter of welcome.

The personnel office can determine that the employee is familiar with the new job and what is expected of him. The employee should have no misconceptions or illusions about his job. The new employee should not be given cause for dissatisfaction by discovering that the job is completely different or has changed substantially from what he has been led to expect.

The primary function of the personnel office is to provide central coordination of induction. It should assist the supervisors in fulfilling their responsibilities towards induction.



### Inducting the New Employee

The supervisor has complete responsibility in the induction of the new employee. He has several steps which he should follow in order to guarantee proper and thorough induction. It is not necessary for all of these steps to be followed, nor is it necessary for each step to be in the detail outlined in this report. However, each municipality must recognize its problems and prepare itself accordingly.

Welcoming the New Employee. The first step that the supervisor undertakes in inducting the new employee is to welcome him and to make him feel that he is wanted. The supervisor recognizes that the new employee may be tired and bewildered after going through introduction, interview, and description of city government, the departmental function, and his own assignment. Therefore the biggest job the supervisor has is to put the man at ease and to make him feel that everyone is interested in his success on the job. A smile and a welcome handshake are appropriate at this time. Conversation is on an informal basis, and the supervisor of course tries to show personal interest in the employee by asking about his previous work, family, home, and transportation facilities to the job.

Discussing the New Job. Next the supervisor tells the new employee about the particular function of his office or section and the relationship that the employee's job has with the performance of the entire department. The supervisor tries to convey the idea that the department or section is a good place to work and that the unit has a recognized function in municipal government. The new employee is told about his job, the standards of production that are expected, and the importance of his job.

Informing Him of Personnel Rules. Third, the supervisor gives the employee essential information on office or unit personnel policies and regulations such as lunch hour, rest periods, safety regulations, work supplies, and so on. The new employee should be made to feel that he can ask questions of the supervisor whenever the occasion arises. The important thing is that the new employee obtains his information from his supervisor and not from a well-meaning but misinformed co-worker.

Presenting Him with Printed Information. The supervisor should provide the employee with as much printed matter as necessary. The supervisor usually does this during the initial interview; in some cities the personnel office may give the employee the matter when he is initially hired, or the city may mail information to the employee's home.

Phoenix provides an example of the printed matter that can be given to the new city employee: (1) an employee handbook listing the rules and regulations of city employment, promotional opportunities, employee benefits, and personnel rules; (2) a progress report commemorating the city's 75th anniversary; (3) an organizational chart of the city government; (4) Blue Cross and Blue Shield information; (5) credit union leaflets; (6) Red Cross identification card, and (7) a payroll deduction authorization for the Community Services Fund. Other printed information that may be provided for the new employee would be an annual report, information on employees' social club or organization, group insurance plan information, and a map of the city. The supervisor can review the printed information in brief. The leaflets and pamphlet are designed so that the new employee can read them at his leisure and use them for reference.

Turning Him over to a Sponsor. The supervisor may find that because of the complexities of his job or the physical layout of the office, he is not able to give much time to the new employee during the first few days. The supervisor can designate a responsible senior employee to act as a sponsor. The sponsor does not assume responsibility for inducting the new employee, nor does he have any supervisory authority. The sponsor has the task of guiding the newcomer through the first few days on the job. He will introduce the newcomer to his fellow employees, other workers in the section, and other persons he may encounter because of his work in the section. The sponsor shows the new employee around the office and the area. He shows the newcomer the location of the work supplies, first aid and safety equipment, and the direction and location of other offices and departments. The sponsor is available for comment concerning routine questions that the employee feels are too trivial to ask the supervisor.



The supervisor should choose the employee who will act as a sponsor with care. The sponsor should be a qualified individual who likes his job and is loyal to his department. He must have the qualifications of being friendly and adjusting easily to a stranger. In particular the sponsor should realize that his function is only a temporary one and generally ceases within a few days — as soon as the new employee has become acquainted with his environment and his co-workers.

Interview at the End of the Day. The next step is for the supervisor to hold an informal interview with the new employee at the end of the first day on the job. In fact the supervisor may find it necessary to hold similar interviews during the first few days. The end-of-the-day interview does not take place at one minute to five, and consist of the brief question: "How are you doing?" The supervisor plans the interview so that it will take place well in advance of quitting time in order that enough time will be available for questions. The supervisor clarifies the vital information told to the new employee concerning the job and the working conditions. The supervisor is not concerned with the newcomer's work performance at this time, but he is concerned with his adjustment to the working environment, to his co-workers, and to the organization.

Interview at the End of the Week. Another step the supervisor may wish to take is a formal interview at the end of the employee's first or second week of employment. At this time the supervisor reviews with the employee much of the information that was presented to him on the first day of arrival. He may ask the employee to turn in a signed slip stating that he has read the employee handbook and other material that was given to him.

The supervisor commends the new employee on strong points in his work, advises him on his shortcomings, and more or less makes certain that he is adjusting to his job. It is important that the supervisor take time to make certain that the employee's adjustment fits into his home life schedule. This is especially applicable if the employee is a new resident to the city and has problems concerning housing and schooling for his children. A supervisor should invite questions and patiently listen to any of the newcomer's problems even though they may be out of his jurisdiction or may be uncorrectable. The purpose of this interview is to anticipate any incident that may arise.

Periodic Interviews. Generally the need for daily or weekly interviews passes quickly. The supervisor can expect that the new employee has made substantial progress in adjusting to his working conditions, has become acquainted with his co-workers, and is basically familiar with the major personnel regulations. Nevertheless the supervisor cannot ignore the next step which is periodically interviewing or maintaining contact between himself and the new employee, until such time that he feels that the new employee has become an accepted member of the organization.

The supervisor should hold monthly or bi-monthly informal interviews until the end of the new employee's probationary period. These interviews are not training sessions; rather they are an exchange of information designed to affect adjustment to the job and loyalty to the organization. The supervisor conveys to the employee that he has not been forgotten and that the organization is interested in his progress. The supervisor realizes that even though the new employee may have overcome his initial fears caused by unfamiliarity to location and co-workers, he has not been in the organization long enough to feel that he has been completely accepted.

Formal Orientation Classes. A large city may find it feasible to gather together all its new employees for an orientation class on the various aspects of municipal employment. This may occur once a month with all new employees hired within the past 30 days in attendance.

This step conveys to the new employee that the city has a direct interest in retaining them as permanent members of the organization. Furthermore, the employee is informed in detail of the career service, fringe benefits, personnel procedures, and orientation instructions. The employees are able to meet city officials and other new employees. The employee is given a complete and uniform orientation on much of the information with which he has become familiar during his initial arrival on the job. The orientation class does not relieve the supervisor of his responsibility in inducting a new employee to a job; rather the orientation class assists in disseminating correct information and promoting organizational loyalty.

The following is an outline of an orientation class conducted by the city of Phoenix:



On the second Monday of each month all new employees are invited by the manager to attend (on city time) a four-hour session. A personnel department technician acts as host. The number attending averages about 18, therefore, a very informal grouping around a large conference table is permissible. After the host introduces himself, each stands and introduces himself, states the department for which he works, and how long he has been employed.

A typical agenda for the Phoenix program is:

- 8:00 to 8:15 Assembly, introductions, statement of purpose of class.
- 8:15 to 8:25 Greetings from the mayor (in person).
- 8:25 to 8:45 Greetings from the manager (in person).
- 8:45 to 9:20 Film on Phoenix — "Your City."
- 9:20 to 9:30 Coffee Break.
- 9:30 to 9:40 Blue Cross, Blue Shield representative.
- 9:40 to 9:50 City of Phoenix Credit Union discussion by secretary of credit union.
- 9:50 to 10:00 Retirement benefits by secretary of retirement board.
- 10:00 to 10:15 Location of city properties, growth, and value by city assessor.
- 10:15 to 10:30 Functional organization by personnel director.
- 10:30 to 10:40 Credit union representative.
- 10:40 to 10:50 COPMEA representative (City of Phoenix Municipal Employee Association — a social group).
- 10:50 to 11:00 Short break.
- 11:00 to 12:00 Review of employee manual by host technician.

Class is then dismissed.

San Diego has a similar program and in addition includes a half-hour visit to a city council meeting. The visit is called out on the official docket. The mayor recognizes the group and asks them to rise for all to see.

Completion of Induction. The final step is to recognize that after the employee has been on the job for a period of time the need for induction diminishes in importance until the time arrives when it is no longer needed. It usually should terminate with the completion of the employee's probationary period. The supervisor should take official action to inform the employee that he has successfully completed the induction period.

He may call the employee in for a formal conference and review and clarify for the final time (at least as far as the induction period is concerned) questions and problems pertaining to the job. The supervisor informs the new employee that he has successfully assimilated himself as an important member of the group and that it is desired that he continue as a permanent member of the organization.

The employee is officially notified that he has successfully completed his probationary period. Depending upon the size of the municipality and personnel procedures, such recognition should come from either the chief executive, the department head, or the personnel officer. The recognition can be done in three ways: the employee may receive a letter of recognition; he may be invited to attend a formal meeting comprised of other new employees who have successfully completed the same stage; or he may be informally told of his achievement during lunch or coffee-break. The important thing is that the completion of the induction and probationary periods is recognized.

#### Inducting the New Employee in Smaller Cities

Many of the steps outlined above are not necessary in smaller cities because of the size of the labor force or because of the proximity of the job to supervisors. Nevertheless, no city, regardless of its size, can afford to ignore completely induction among its new employees. Therefore, several suggestions are presented which may be more applicable to the smaller cities in orientating the new employee to his job.

The chief administrator is responsible for the induction program in the smaller city; in fact, he usually has the additional responsibility of carrying out some of the induction steps. The chief executive or the department head personally welcomes a new employee the day he reports to work.



He explains the personnel policies of the city, rules and regulations pertaining to the job, the promotional and advancement opportunities within his job and within city employment, and any other aspect of employment that the new employee should know. The chief executive or department head should provide a printed or mimeographed sheet or booklet on the personnel rules and regulations of the city; the annual report for the city; information or leaflets pertaining to group insurance, health and accident insurance, credit union, and employee social organizations; and an organization chart and municipal directory.

The new employee should not be ignored after the initial interview. The department head or chief executive should make periodic informal checks on the progress of the new employee and his assimilation in the organization. At least once or twice during the probationary period the chief executive or department head should call the employee in for a formal interview pertaining to his induction and orientation progress. During this interview it should be determined what progress the employee is making, his feelings toward the job and co-workers, his feelings toward city employment and the benefits it has to offer, and any other similar problems or aspects which may affect his work.

At the end of the probationary and induction period, the chief executive or the department head should take some official act which will recognize this accomplishment. It would be best in smaller cities for the chief executive to personally congratulate the new employee on his accomplishment and to present him with a letter to that effect.

The important thing about induction in a smaller city is not so much the intricate steps that may be taken to guarantee induction as the fact that some type of induction is conducted. In general, the basic steps pertaining to induction in a large city can be undertaken by a smaller city except for the necessary detail involved. Regardless of the size of the city, a new employee will react similarly in most situations when first reporting to a job. If he is received in a friendly manner and if personal concern is shown toward him, the new employee will be less apprehensive towards his job and his supervisors.

### Conclusion

The employee induction program is one of the important aspects of a municipal personnel procedure. Properly organized and consistently used, an induction program is a useful aid in reducing turnover among new employees.

The induction program cannot be uniformly operated in all municipalities. Much depends upon individual personnel policies, organizational size and number, physical layout and location, and functions of the unit or section. An induction program, in itself, cannot guarantee to eliminate employee turnover. Contributing factors such as labor market, working conditions, type of work, and basic personnel program affect the end results. An induction program is only an aid to alleviate turnover and to retain competent personnel.

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*Note:* This report was prepared by John J. Hunnewell, staff member, International City Managers' Association.



Figure 1

NEW EMPLOYEE INDUCTION GUIDEOffice of Administrative Management - Training Section - City of San Diego

Instruction: This is a check list guide to help department heads and their designated representatives insure that major induction items are explained to new employees. Check off each item as it is completed, arrange a date for the employee to take the City sponsored Orientation Class, sign and route completed guide to the City Training Officer. This guide must be completed before employees can be scheduled for the City Orientation Class.

Name of Employee	Job Classification	Department	Date
<u>WHO'S WHO</u>		<u>WHAT'S WHAT</u>	<u>CIVIL SERVICE MANUAL</u>
Introduce employee to:	Work & organization of Dept. <input type="checkbox"/>	Back cover completed	
1. Dept. or Div. Head <input type="checkbox"/>	The function of employee's unit <input type="checkbox"/>	& Manual issued <input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Immediate Supervisor <input type="checkbox"/>	Specific employee job duties <input type="checkbox"/>	Questions will be answered in the Orientation Class.	
3. Fellow Workers <input type="checkbox"/>	Job performance standards <input type="checkbox"/>		
<u>WORK SCHEDULE</u>	Supplies & equipment (Where to get them) <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>TIME OFF</u>	
Hours <input type="checkbox"/> Rest Period <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>SAFETY 1st-Last-Always</u>	Importance of notifying office when late, sick or injured <input type="checkbox"/>	
Overtime <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch-when-where <input type="checkbox"/>	Particular reg's. of Dept. <input type="checkbox"/>	Departmental policy on scheduling of vacations <input type="checkbox"/>	
<u>PERSONALS</u>	Accident reporting <input type="checkbox"/>	Departmental requirements on sick & injury leave <input type="checkbox"/>	
Smoking <input type="checkbox"/> Rest Rooms <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>PAYROLL INFORMATION</u>		
Parking <input type="checkbox"/> Personal appear. <input type="checkbox"/>	Pay period and pay checks <input type="checkbox"/>		

ORIENTATION CLASS (INSERT DATE YOU WISH EMPLOYEE TO ATTEND)

- Items to be covered:
1. Welcome & Introduction
  2. History & Organization of the City
  3. Civil Service Functions
  4. Employee Services
  5. Retirement Program ☐
  6. Safety Program ☐

Employee to attend one of the following classes:

Safety Meeting Room, 20th & B Sts. on 2nd  
Tuesday of each month, 8:00 to 12:00 a.m.

Civic Center, Room 059, 4th Tuesday of  
each month, 8:00 to 12:00 a.m.

Date

By returning this completed guide to the Training Officer, you have made a reservation for the employee in the Orientation Class.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Supervisor\_\_\_\_\_  
Tel. Ext.